



Illinois State Board of Education

100 West Randolph Street, Suite 14-300 • Chicago, Illinois 60601-3283
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James T. Meeks
Chairman

Tony Smith, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Education

July 11, 2017

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Labor, Health and Human Services
Education Appropriations Subcommittee
House of Representatives
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services
Education Appropriations Subcommittee
House of Representatives
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Frelinghuysen and Cole and Ranking Members Lowey and DeLauro:

I am writing today to urge that funding levels for fiscal year 2018 be protected for programs under Title II, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and be aligned to the amounts originally authorized under the law. This is the first year of implementation of the new law and we need the support of Congress to meet the challenges and high ideals expected of all of us under ESSA.

Title II, Part A, 'Supporting Effective Instruction', was authorized at \$2.295 billion dollars and is proposed for elimination in the President's budget. Complete elimination, any additional cuts or even continued funding at the FY17 Omnibus levels will cause great disruption for our schools, students, educators, and families. At a minimum, historic fiscal levels should be restored.

The elimination of funding for Title II, Part A would devastate districts in Illinois that rely on those funds to provide support for teachers who instruct our students. Districts such as Charleston CUSD 1 use Title II funding to orchestrate teacher collaboration sessions to review data, problem-solve, and incorporate research-based instructional strategies aimed at closing achievement gaps. Now, more than ever, as our state experiences a crippling teacher shortage and we transition to a new accountability system, our schools rely on

Title II funding to ensure all teachers receive the training and growth opportunities they need to remain effective and energized in the profession.

We know more of these innovative, effective uses are being developed throughout the state. For example, New Lenox School District 122 uses Title II funding to offer an in-house professional development model with more than 75 courses, including a strand of courses designed specifically for utilizing technology at the point of instruction. We cannot remove this critical funding. It is imperative to fund education programs at the levels authorized in this new federal law so that Illinois can implement it with fidelity in the manner in which Congress intended.

Additional testimonials are attached. The Illinois education community is passionate and committed to providing a high quality education to the students in Illinois and we need your support to meet that goal. We look forward to working with you to ensure that education funding is restored to ensure education equity for the students in Illinois.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Smith', with a stylized, flowing script.

Tony Smith, Ph.D.

State Superintendent of Education

For the last several years, Title II funds have allowed our district to provide high-quality professional development about standards-based instruction, research-based unit design, and integration of technology for teaching and learning. These professional learning opportunities have a direct impact on student learning and achievement as teachers apply the skills and knowledge gained from these experiences in their classrooms. A 21st-century learning environment requires teachers to be innovative and responsive to the needs of ALL students. Teachers must have the opportunity to expand their professional knowledge base and develop new skills if they are to effectively engage today's learners.

*- Mary T. Gricus, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent
Lemont-Bromberek Combined School District 113A*

Title II Funding is currently used to provide professional development for teachers and has been used to reduce class sizes. Both are vital in how effective our teachers are in meeting their students' individual needs. Whether new and improved training or smaller class sizes, both scenarios have positively impacted our student and teacher performance. Title II funding is necessary, especially during a time when districts are experiencing unprecedented shortfalls in funding; districts do not need another negative hurdle to try and to clear. Ultimately, this will impact our students by eliminating needed professional development and/or having larger class sizes in the coming years.

*- Mark B. Skertich
Superintendent
Southwestern CUSD #9*

As the director of instruction, I've used Title II money to fund book studies targeted at district initiatives. Using Title funds, I'm able to purchase the needed PD and support for my teachers. The same with math. We needed professional development on how to incorporate the eight mathematical practices into our daily instruction. What does guided math look like? How might it be different at a junior high or high school? Without these funds, many teachers will be left on their own. The director of instruction can only be expected to have expertise in so many areas. Instead, the goal should be to build experts within the district using quality college courses/instruction and professional development.

*- Nicole P. Rummel, Ed.D.
Director of Instruction
El Paso Gridley CUSD #11*

The elimination of Title II would be devastating to what we have developed with the assistance of Title II. I have been at Joliet West High School for 17 years as an English teacher, and for 11 of those years I have taught two classes and then served as our building's English instructional coach, a position made possible only through Title II. Our district has similar positions for math, social science, science, special education, and technology. With this support system in place, we have been able to mentor teachers, lead professional development, create tutoring opportunities for struggling students, and much more. The impact of our job on student achievement is significant, given that we work hard to promote a strong, positive classroom environment to make students more successful. We have even used the time and resources we have available as instructional coaches to develop an assistance room students can visit throughout the day.

*- Brian Newman
Joliet West High School
English Teacher and Instructional Coach (a position created through Title II funding)*

Of all the research and experience-based opinions, there is much agreement that the quality of a child's teacher has the greatest impact. More than any program, more than any increased rigor, more than an effective principal, it comes down to the quality of the teacher. Title II is our district's primary source to fund professional development and coaching opportunities designed to improve the quality of our teachers. We have used these funds to hire math coaches to model and support elementary math instruction. In addition to that, we pay for training for our high school staff to learn and teach new Advanced Placement courses. Training to attend instructional technology conferences has routinely come from this funding source, too. Loss of these funds will mean losing these professional development opportunities. Loss of ongoing coaching and professional development will decrease teacher quality. A decrease in teacher quality will negatively impact student achievement.

*- Dr. Jeff Schuler
Superintendent of Schools
Community Unit School District 200*

The reduction of these funds would cause the district to eliminate 90 percent of its professional learning opportunities. Title II funding has allowed New Lenox School District 122 to offer an in-house professional development model (New Lenox University) that has proven to be consistently a more effective and efficient model than utilizing outside resources. Currently, more than 75 courses are offered throughout the year, with our expert teachers providing workshops and courses in all areas of evidence-based reading and math practices. In addition, a strand of courses designed specifically for utilizing technology at the point of instruction has been critical to the professional learning of the district's teachers. These courses are specifically designed to train teachers to use technological tools and applications on a daily basis to enhance student achievement.

*- Peggy Manville, Ed.D.
Superintendent
New Lenox School District 122*

Results from our district's Title II needs assessment show that professional staff are in need of additional training on the implementation of the state's standards for learning and, in particular, planning for classroom instruction that differentiates for individual students' needs and interests. Our district primarily utilizes teacher collaboration sessions (e.g., PLCs) to review data, problem-solve, and incorporate research-based instructional strategies aimed at closing achievement gaps. Title II funds allow teachers to meet during the students' school day to participate in collaborative sessions aimed at monitoring students' progress and continually improving instructional strategies. In addition, Title II funds provide stipends to newly employed teachers and their mentors to participate in training prior to the beginning of the school year as support for beginning teachers to align their instruction with these same aims. In addition, Title II funds allow for teachers and their mentors to collaborate during the school year in order to develop and strengthen their expertise.

*- Todd J. Vilardo
Assistant Superintendent
Charleston CUSD #1*



GLENBARD TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 87

596 Crescent Boulevard, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137-4297 (630) 469-9100, www.glenbard87.org

Proposed Title II Funding Cuts' Impact on Glenbard District 87

Glenbard Township High School District 87, the third largest high school district in Illinois, relies on Title II revenue to fund the following:

- Portion of Teaching and Learning Coordinator's salary
- Professional development related to mathematics and science
- Supplies for mathematics and science training and professional development

The federal government's proposed 13% reduction in federal funding for elementary and secondary public schools would negatively affect Glenbard's continuous improvement work and, in turn, student achievement.

Specifically, the proposed budget cut would reduce the scope of the Glenbard Teaching and Learning Coordinator's work, which drives professional development across Glenbard's four high schools. The Teaching and Learning Coordinator is a key leader of Glenbard's professional development, which pushes progress toward the strategic plan goals. The Teaching and Learning Coordinator:

- Leads Glenbard Instructional Support Coaches in their professional development work with educators to improve data analysis and instructional best practices.
- Leads reading and mathematics assessment initiatives. Provides data interpretation, instructional planning and professional development related to assessments.
- Works directly with the Teaching and Learning Division, Assistant Principals for Instruction and Department Chairmen on all major instructional initiatives, including best practices in assessment, Illinois Learning Standards, and Response to Intervention
- Designs, manages and monitors Glenbard mathematics initiatives, instruction and strategies including embedding the New Illinois Learning Standards 8 Standards of Mathematical Practice.
- Designs, manages and monitors Glenbard science initiatives, instruction and strategies including embedding the Next Generation Science Standards Science and Engineering Practices.

Title II funding is critical to Glenbard District 87's professional development, continuous improvement and student achievement. Glenbard urges legislators to reject any efforts to reduce federal funding for elementary and secondary public schools.

How does Title II funding support innovative or evidence-based learning opportunities for educators in your district?

The Title II funding received by the Valley View School District has been integral in strengthening our practices in the areas of literacy, math, science, technology, and social-emotional learning. A large portion of this money is used to hire consultants, send educators to conferences, and provide extra pay to staff all for the purpose of learning about research-based, effective instructional practices.

Moreover, the Valley View School District is intently focused on and highly engaged in Visible Learning and measuring the impact of our collective efforts on student learning. In learning how we can best influence the learning of our students, we are modifying our practices to shift our energies and attention toward the strategies we find through reflection are having the greatest effect. In achieving this ambition, we rely heavily on Title II funding to train our educators in the areas of evidence collection, data analysis, reflective coaching, and assessment literacy.

Title II is allowing the Valley View School District to fund professional development that is revolutionizing the instruction in our district by equipping educators with the abilities to develop all of our students into assessment capable learners. And as Title II shapes and enhances the practice of our teachers and leaders, the effects of our enhanced learning as a district on students are what really matter. Through the pedagogical skills of our well-trained staff, our students are growing in their capacity to assess their own learning, all the while gauging where they need help, where they are meeting standards, and where they are ready to move on to something more challenging. It is through this paradigm for teaching and learning that the Valley View School District is positively impacting our student outcomes and ensuring that all of our students will one day be college and career ready.

How does Title II funding help attract, retain, or develop high-quality educators in your district - other than through teacher compensation and reduction of class sizes.

Mentoring and Induction

The Valley View School District does indeed fund a highly impactful mentoring and induction program, not only for new teachers, but for educators who are in their first four years of service in our schools. Thanks to Title II funds, we are able to provide multiple layers of supports and job-embedded learning to help new hires find success in their positions. All teachers, prior to the first day of school, are provided with several days of orientation trainings that give them the necessary background knowledge of their particular building and the district's mission and vision to allow them to successfully navigate their new surroundings upon students arriving on the first day. Staff are also exposed to research-based classroom management strategies that equip them with tools to be effective and impactful classroom leaders from the start.

Beyond their initial orientation, new educators in the Valley View School District are each assigned a mentor who works with them continually throughout their first years in the district. The mentors--who receive extra hours in pay per our collective bargaining agreement that is funded by Title II--are typically veteran teachers working within the same content area or grade level who provide a wide array of services and support to help their proteges in overcoming the challenges associated with being a new teacher. The most important role of the mentor, however, is to engage the new teacher in the peer observation process. The mentor observes the classroom practices of the new teacher and provides constructive criticism steeped in years of professional experience and research-based strategies from Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching. Through reflective conversations and coaching, this allows the new teachers to flourish in their first years. Additionally, resources are provided that allow the new teachers to visit their mentors and other highly regarded teachers in the building to observe effective instructional practices in action that they would be able to adapt for their own classrooms.

One final piece of our mentoring and induction program that is funded by Title II and is absolutely critical to the success of our new teachers is the professional development we provide to new teachers in a number of different areas. New teachers attend cohort meetings with their peers at the same stage in their careers. In these sessions, they learn about effective teaching practices by studying the work of Charlotte Danielson, they absorb Visible Learning research and mindframes in order to help our students achieve college and career readiness, and they gain knowledge of standards and assessment literacy by learning about the Common Formative Assessment 2.0 process.

In all, our Title II-funded mentoring and induction program is critical to the success of our educational programs here in the Valley View School District. Without this program, not only would our collective instructional practices in the district suffer, but there would be an immeasurable negative impact on the learning of our student body. This is evidenced by the data we collect from our new teachers who have gone through the program; our data show that overwhelming majorities of our new teachers strongly agree that our program helps them reflect and grow in the areas of planning and assessment, classroom environment, delivery of instruction, and professional responsibilities. Additionally, the training of mentors is a critical component of building leadership capacity and embedded professional learning. Not only are trained mentors impactful for new educators, they also assist in a climate of professional expertise at the building level.

Instructional Coaching

The Valley View School District recently implemented an Instructional Coaching program that served two purposes:

- 1) Assist teachers in reflection and differentiated self-directed professional development based on the needs of students
- 2) Assist teachers in the process of gathering and analyzing data of student growth as a result of their instruction. This analysis is part of their performance evaluation process.

Title II funds have provided training for 55 coaches and prospective coaches in VVSD. These coaches have engaged in various coaching cycles with teams and individual educators throughout this year. The additional trainees are part of an emerging teacher leadership system in the district where VVSD will “grow our own from classroom to coaching to potentially administration”. This, in a time where there are fewer building and district leaders available to replace those retiring, will be critical in keeping VVSD systems alive through inevitable transitions.

All training for coaches has been paid through our Title II development funds. Without Title II, this leadership pipeline, and the benefit to educators who are able to engage in job-embedded professional development to improve the learning of students, will cease.

Gregory Harris
Title II Administrator
Valley View C. U. S. D. 365U

Wildwood IB World Magnet School

6950 North Hiawatha Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60646

Phone: 773-534-1188

May 10, 2017

Illinois State Board of Education

essa@isbe.net

RE: Title II Funding Response from Wildwood IB World Magnet School, Chicago Public School District

Thank you for the call to submit stories from our school district to help advocate against the proposed cuts to the U.S. Department of Education. Our school, Wildwood IB World Magnet, in Chicago, Illinois, would be particularly impacted by the elimination of Title II funding. We have collected the below feedback from our school community and hope it will be of use to you.

Sincerely,

Mary Beth Cunat

Principal

The White House budget proposal claims Title II funding is “poorly targeted and spread thinly across thousands of districts with scant evidence of impact.” But, removing this financial support, however “thinly spread” it may be, can only serve to harm already struggling school districts without evidence that it will provide greater impact directed elsewhere. While perhaps the impact of Title II funds has not been meaningfully quantified at the national level, our community can attest anecdotally that the program *is* making a meaningful difference at the local level. At our neighborhood school, Wildwood IB Magnet School, Title II funding provides our budget with enough boost to ensure we can properly staff teachers and prevent combined-grade classrooms. There is nothing “scant” about the impact of combining grade levels and increasing student to teacher ratios. Small actions can have big impacts. Eliminating the entire Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants program, because it doesn’t do *enough*, is not the solution to the problem. You don’t junk your car when the alignment is off; you fix the wheels and drive straight again.

As a parent of a kindergartener for the 2016-2017 school year, I have been amazed by the commitment of the teaching staff and school administration to provide a warm, engaging, and productive learning environment for our children with bare-bones resources. I urge our legislators to continue to support the country’s public school system and protect Title II funding.

—Kylie Anderson, Parent

As a parent of 3 children, education and the quality of our school is a high priority in choosing where we live. One of the main reasons we choose to stay in Chicago and not move to a suburban school district with less funding challenges is the quality of the teachers and staff at Wildwood School. With my eldest starting kindergarten in 2012, I have gotten to know many of the teachers at school. The kindergarten teacher at that time greatly helped my daughter who was having anxiety about attending school all day. When my daughter got to have the same teacher again in 1st grade, she thrived as a student and overcame the challenge of being one of the youngest in her grade.

Now having two children attending school, I appreciate the continuity my family experiences from returning teachers. Being familiar with teachers keeps communication between myself and them streamlined, which helps me as a parent stay involved in the kids schoolwork. I am not alone in my great concern as a parent about how eliminating the Title II funds will impact our students and the family-centered holistic education they receive.

—Carla Johns, Parent

Please understand the importance of the Title II funding for CPS schools, specifically our neighborhood school, Wildwood World Magnet School. My son has attended Wildwood since kindergarten and his learning experience is valued beyond words. The teachers he has had, either as homeroom teachers or special teachers, work so hard each and every day to provide a 21st century learning experience for EVERY child at Wildwood. My son understands that ALL teachers at Wildwood value their relationship with him and others no matter what grade they are in. They take time out of their busy day to say hello to ALL students and make them feel important and valued. My son's current 5th grade was also his 2nd grade teacher. This teacher is more than just a teacher. He is a mentor to my son. He is a community role model to all his students. He is a leader in fighting for equal rights for people of all kinds of backgrounds. This teacher is just one of many who have made a positive impact on my son, his peers, my family and our community. The amazing fact is that this also describes many of the teachers and staff at Wildwood World Magnet School. Please understand that Title II funding is critical in preserving this learning community at Wildwood World Magnet School.

—Caryn Corcoran, Parent



TO: Dr. John Sparlin, Superintendent
Dr. Judith Minor, Associate Superintendent

FROM: Dr. Lisa Smith, Executive Director for Teaching and Learning

SUBJECT: Value and Uses of Title II Funding for SD308

DATE: May 11, 2017

Title II Funding - The purpose of Title II funding is to ultimately improve student achievement by supporting and developing highly effective teachers and administrators. School District 308 relies heavily on Title II funding to support a number of research-based, innovative professional development opportunities for our teachers and administrators. In a time of limited state funding, the loss of Title II would be devastating and would negatively impact student achievement.

A few recent opportunities funded through Title II include:

1. **Principal Leadership/Mentor Program** - As a means to develop and retain effective school leaders, we have enrolled two of our highly effective, experienced principals in a national Principal Leadership Training. Their learning will enable our district to develop a more formalized mentoring program for our new and experienced principals. It will also provide training opportunities that will allow us to “grow our own” future administrators.
2. **Teacher/Mentor Program Training** - Developed and implemented in-district, this new online/blended mentoring support program for second-year teachers offers an online forum for greater flexibility to expand teachers’ knowledge and skills in the classroom via a virtual PLC.
3. **Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)** – As a schoolwide system of support, AVID methodologies are used to train educators on research-based, “best practices” designed to prepare students for the rigors of high school, college, and career. AVID serves as an essential strategy for closing the achievement gap, making college access and success available to ALL students. AVID teaches students skills and behaviors for academic success, provides intensive support with tutorials and strong student/teacher relationships, creates a positive peer group for students, and develops a sense of hope for personal achievement gained through hard work and determination.



Special Note: Over the course of the last three years, over 250 teachers and administrators from SD308 have had the opportunity to attend an AVID Summer Institute to participate in intense training on best practice strategies in writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and reading. Next year, approximately 10,000 of our 18,000 students at the elementary, junior high and high school levels will be utilizing AVID strategies within their classrooms as they preparing for the rigors of college and careers. We could not have offered this opportunity to so many SD308 teachers and administrators without Title II funding.

4. **National Board Professional Development Facilitators** - We have used Title II dollars to support stipends for our two trained National Board Certification Coaches, who facilitate in-district cohorts for our teachers working to earn their National Board credentials. As a result, of our renewed efforts to support the National Board process over the course of the last three years, we recently had 19 teachers turn in their final submissions for certification and we have two active cohorts, each with 10-11 candidates working through the certification process.
5. **Cognitive Coaching** - This past year we were able to provide Cognitive Coaching training to our literacy specialists, who are teacher leaders, as well as a number of our administrators. **Cognitive coaching** is a research-based **coaching model** that requires the **coach** to be non-judgmental, to encourage reflective practice, and to guide another person to self-directed learning. The feedback on this training was overwhelmingly positive, with participants expressing that, as leaders, no one had ever provided them with the skills needs to help others be aware of their own thinking as a means to foster their own thinking process and reflection.

While I have shared an overview on some of our most recent targeted areas of professional development, Title II funds have also been used to support the development of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Training, Assessment Literacy, Culturally Responsive Teaching, Social Emotional Learning, teacher and principal evaluation and Advanced Placement teacher workshops.

Title II funding truly makes a difference in the development of highly qualified teachers and administrators. Professional growth opportunities that truly develop teachers and administrators to their greatest potential do impact student achievement. Over the course of the last four years and with a focused professional development plan in place supported with Title II dollars, our student success rate has steadily increased.

- The number of students in Advanced Placement courses has increased by 700%.
- Students growth trends in reading and math continue to exceed state averages.
- Our average ACT score increased annually (and we expect to see the same trend with the SAT).
- Our district high schools have been rated Silver by US News and World Report as Top Schools in the nation.
- Teachers have been recognized on the local and state level for their accomplishments...and the successes go on.

In short, not only do Title II dollars make a difference in the success of our students, they are essential!



ALB COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #428
Serving the Cortland, DeKalb and Malta Communities



May 12, 2017

To the Illinois State Board of Education:

DeKalb Community School District #428 serves a community that has become more multiculturally diverse, as well as increasingly poor. 60% of the student population is on free/reduced lunch. Like many districts across the state, DeKalb heavily depends upon the State of Illinois for funding, along with Federal funding through Title I, II, and III.

DeKalb CUSD #428 qualifies for Title I, K-12, based upon our socioeconomic factors. However, years ago, it was decided the focus of the Title I funding would be completely applied to grades Kindergarten through five, and not to include grades six through twelve. As a result, any instructional support or professional development at the secondary level has had to completely rely upon Title II. The prospect of Title II being eliminated or severely cut, would have a devastating effect upon the development and instructional support of our secondary teachers here in DeKalb, and as a result have an adverse impact upon our students' academic achievement.

Three years ago, for grades six through twelve, we developed the One-Year/Five-Year Plan, collaboratively with the direction and input from both teachers and administrators at the secondary level. Its initial purpose was to provide a road map as we made the necessary instructional and curricular shifts to the Common Core. Over time, its purpose has come to support the following priorities for our district at the secondary level: student engagement, teacher collaboration, assessment literacy, and alignment to content and social justice standards. I am including Year Two for 2016-2017, along with Year Three for 2017-2018 with this letter.

Two questions have been posed: How does Title II funds support innovative or evidenced-based professional learning opportunities in our district? How does Title II funding help attract, retain, or develop high-quality educators in our district? To respond to those two questions, let me create a picture of how Title II funding has made a tremendous impact in our district, through the implementation of Year Two of the One-Year/Five-Year Plan, and how we plan to move forward with Year Three.

The first priority of the One-Year/Five-Year Plan is student engagement. For the 2016-2017 academic year, responding to the increasing diversity, both culturally and economically, initial social justice training was provided both at administrative leadership meetings as well as faculty meetings. As we move into Year Three, more broad-based professional development in social justice and multiculturalism will be provided to support the district's Diversity Plan, to be rolled out at the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year. In conjunction with this training, it is hoped more professional development and support can be given to teachers to address the social-emotional needs of our students. With the increasing levels of poverty in our district, schools are

"SCHOOL, COMMUNITY, FAMILY... A PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION"

901 South Fourth Street, DeKalb, IL 60115 P: 815-754-2350 / F: 815-758-6933

seeing more students who have experienced trauma. Our teachers need training and support to respond to the suffering the students bring into the classrooms. Without Title II funding, none of this professional development will become a reality.

The other three priorities of the One-Year/Five-Year Plan are tightly interrelated: teacher collaboration, assessment literacy, and developing a deeper sense of content standards.

For the past three years at both the middle schools, for the past two years at the high school level, teams of teachers have been organized by grade level and subject area. Including summers, the teams developed core curriculum that reflected the instructional shifts of Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and the new Illinois Standards for Social Sciences. Interwoven throughout this period of curriculum development, the teachers received ongoing embedded training in the areas of assessment development. Numerous assessment retreats, along with support from instructional coaches, have focused on taking the learning targets derived from the standards and creating aligned assessments. This intentional preparation of quality-aligned assessments has helped to guide collaborative discussions about classroom data and using that data to inform instruction. It also prepared our teachers for the rollout of PERA last fall.

In addition, the time provided for teachers has created a district climate of collaboration, so much so, that teachers continually clamor for more. They have developed a deep ownership of their time during curriculum work days, when they have substitutes covering their classes to work collaboratively together. During these work days, the teachers received direction, support and guidance from the Ed Center and the instructional coaches. Just this year alone, 71 middle school teachers covering 575 hours met on curriculum work days. At the high school, 26 teachers covering over 180 hours met on curriculum work days. They also had five early-release days, during which they generated their own agendas and focused on curriculum or assessment development or to begin the discussion about data. Without Title II dollars, it would have been impossible to develop this culture of collaboration among our teachers at the secondary level. The importance of this collaborative curriculum work is highlighted by our student growth data, which indicates that our students' academic skills in reading and math have grown more than projected (when measured by Measures of Academic Progress [MAP]; see MAP data in Appendix A).

Equity, through the development of a guaranteed curriculum between buildings, is a very important product derived from the culture of teacher collaboration we have in DeKalb. Our student population is highly mobile; sometimes students move several times during the school year and attend different schools within the district. Having a guaranteed core curriculum ensures all students receive an equitable education experience, regardless of what school they attend. The curriculum by no means is lock step. However, key text, learning activities and experiences, and common assessments have been identified that drive the direction of the curriculum. Without Title II, we could not have developed a cohesive guaranteed curriculum.

DeKalb CUSD #428 is hardly unique, in terms of the challenges we face. Like all public school districts across the country, we seek to provide a quality and equitable education for all of our students. However, we are forced to do more with less money and resources. Students increasingly come through our doors hungry and suffering from the effects of trauma. We are accountable to implement standards-aligned curriculum and

assessments, and prepare our students for high-stakes assessments. Finally, we must continually find ways to support the emotional and professional development of our educators who interact with all of these challenges on a daily basis.. Please communicate to the Department of Education that without Title II funding, we cannot provide innovative or evidenced-based professional learning opportunities in our district, nor will we be able to help attract, retain, or develop high-quality educators. Please do not eliminate or cut Title II.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dr. Vicky Tusken". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Dr. Vicky Tusken

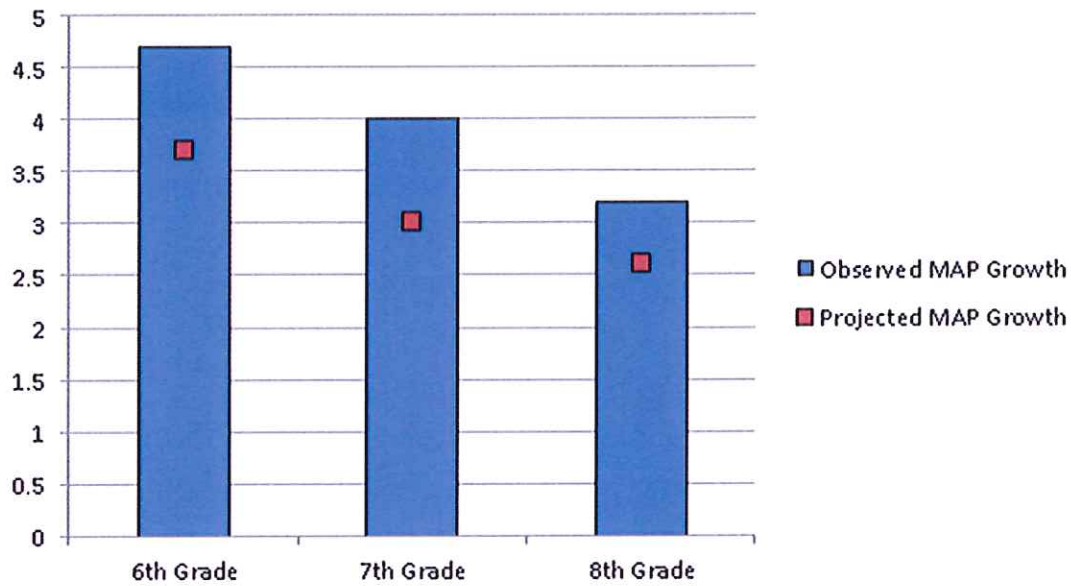
Secondary Curriculum Coordinator

DeKalb Community Unit School District #428

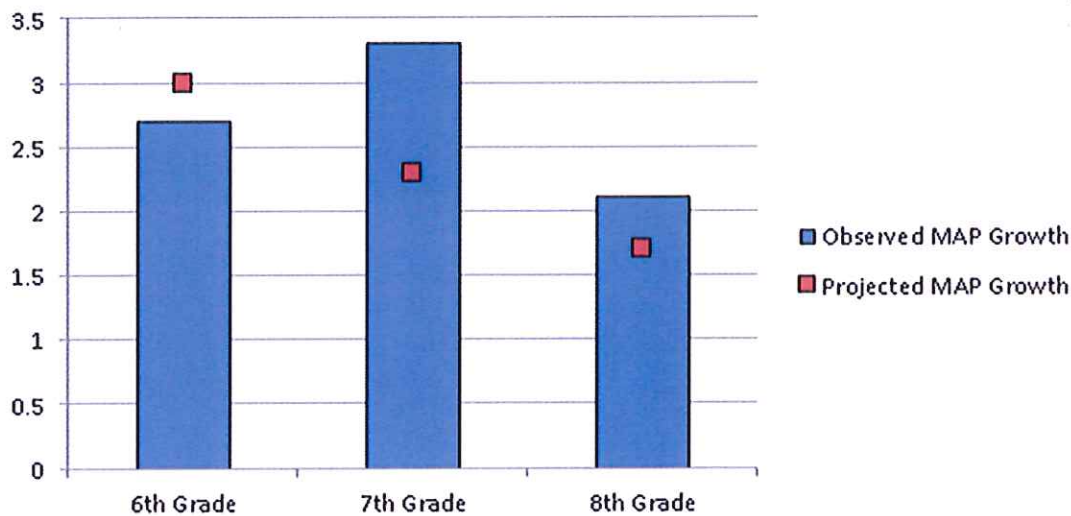
DeKalb, Illinois

Appendix A

Mathematics Growth Fall to Winter 2016-2017



Reading Growth Fall to Winter 2016-2017



East St. Louis School District 189 - East St. Louis, Illinois

By eliminating Title II and 21st Century Community Learning Centers fund, **East St. Louis** would lose approximately **\$2.4 million annually** for essential after-school and teacher support services.



Eliminating Title II funds means...

- Eliminating 15 teachers, resulting in higher classroom sizes (more than 30 per class)
- Eliminating teacher mentorship program and 65 teacher mentor stipends
 - *First year teachers will be less supported and less successful. Teacher mentorship programs improve first year teaching and aid in overall teacher retention.*
- Decrease or elimination of successful staff recruitment and retention efforts (like job fairs)
- Cutting back significantly on professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators alike (including workshop, conference and training costs and travel expenses)

Eliminating funds for 21st Century Community Learning Center programs means...

- Cutting afterschool programming for 660 students, grades 2-12
 - *21st Century programs in District 189 provide small group time with classroom teachers, evening meals, field trips and additional educational enrichment activities (robotics, art, etc.)*
 - These programs...
 - Improve student confidence
 - Increase MAP scores (in one elementary school alone, saw a 52% increase in reading and 50% increase in math in one year for those in the program)
 - Provide a safe space to be after school in a highly violent community
- In the words of 21st Century Community Learning Center program students...
 - *"It helps me with **reading** and **math** skills and educational things and more. The 21st century program helps me work well with my **peers**."*
 - *"This program has helped my family because I eat **dinner** at the program, so my mom doesn't have to make dinner"*
 - *"The program has helped me get **better grades** on my report card."*
 - *"I don't have any help with **homework** once I get home. The teachers are willing to help me and I need a **quiet** place to work on homework and projects and I don't have a **computer** or **internet** access at home."*

To cut the funding supports for Title II and 21st Century Community Learning Centers within the East St. Louis School District would be a **strike against educational social justice**. School District 189 serves 6,100 students in grades preschool through 12th grade. Nearly all East St. Louis students enter school at-risk for academic failure due to extreme poverty; 100% of students qualify for free/reduced price lunch. According to the 2016 Illinois School Report Card, over **99% of students are low income**, 7% were categorized as homeless (underreported), **97.5% of students are African-American and 1.5% are Hispanic**. The percentage of students with a **diagnosed disability (qualifying for special education services) is 15.3%**.

A high percentage of East St. Louis children and youth have a history of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Because our children have deep environmental and family challenges, **more supports and services are required for them to be successful academically** and in the school environment. However, the East St. Louis School District lacks the resources to provide the basic necessities for academics, let alone enrichment and support services. East St Louis School District is among the **most impoverished school districts** in the State of Illinois. Currently less than 10% of the annual district revenue comes from local property taxes and East St Louis has one of the highest tax rates in Illinois at 10.83%. Local revenue cannot sustain this school district. The community's lack of property wealth creates an almost total reliance on state and federal funding as well as competitive grants. A further reduction in federal support will result in **fewer students making academic gains** and may directly correlate toward **increasing the school to prison pipeline** for students within our community.